

Message Text

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17

ACTION COA-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 L-02 EB-07 SCA-01 H-01 INR-05

DLOS-03 PRS-01 CG-00 DOTE-00 SCS-03 PA-01 USIA-06

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R 262058Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3479

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

AMEMBASSY LIMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 8076

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS, EC

SUBJ: FISHING DEVELOPMENTS: TUNA SEASON BEGINS

1. QUITO AND COASTAL PRESS IN RECENT DAYS HAS CARRIED EXCHANGE BETWEEN A MANTA-BASED FISHERMAN'S COOPERATIVE AND GOE SPOKESMAN FROM MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES. IT BEGAN WHEN THE MANTA COOPERATIVE, IRRITATED BY WHAT THEY CONSIDER EXCESSIVE RED TAPE, HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE ALLEGING THAT, WHILE THEIR MEMBERS WERE LANGUISHING IN PORT BECAUSE OF BUREAUCRATIC DELAYS, MINISTRY HAD ALREADY EXPEDITED ISSUANCE OF "OVER 80" PERMITS TO FOREIGN PURSE SEINERS WHICH, WITH THEIR MODERN HIGH-VOLUME EQUIPMENT, WERE CLEANING UP ALL THE TUNA IN SIGHT. MINISTRY REPLY WAS NOTABLY LOW KEY, POINTING OUT THAT ONLY 26 FOREIGN-FLAG FISHERMEN HAD BEEN GRANTED LICENSES, THAT THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY WAS PROCEEDING "NORMALLY", AND THAT LOCAL FISHERMEN, TOO, HAD TO "ADJUST THEMSELVES TO THE DISPOSITIONS" OF THE FISHERIES LAW. SPOKESMAN ALSO ADDED THAT NAVY WAS ON CONSTANT PATROL TO PREVENT ILLEGAL FISHING, AND THAT IT WAS "HIGHLY IMPROBABLE" THAT ANY UNAUTHORIZED FOREIGN VESSELS WERE ON THE SCENE.

2. THE EXCHANGE, OTHERWISE UNIMPORTANT, SOUNDS THE
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OPENING BELL OF THE 1974-75 TUNA FISHING SEASON OFF

ECUADOR. COINCIDENT WITH THE ABOVE, WE ARE INFORMED BY MANTA INDUSTRY SOURCE THAT SUBSTANTIAL SIGHTING OF TUNA WAS MADE IN RECENT DAYS ABOUT 150 MILES OFF ECUADOR'S SOUTHERN COAST NEAR PERUVIAN-CLAIMED WATERS AND THAT, ALONG WITH HIS OWN LOCALLY-REGISTERED BOATS, SOME FOREIGN SEINERS ALSO ON THE SCENE.

3. WE ARE, HOWEVER, HEARTENED BY CALM, ALMOST LACONIC REPLY OF MINISTRY SPOKESMAN AND THE WAY IN WHICH THEY AND LOCAL PRESS HAVE THUS FAR HANDLED INCIDENT, PASSING UP GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR FIRE-EATING PATRIOTIC PRONOUNCEMENTS. POSSIBILITY OF A CALM FISHING SEASON ALSO POINTED UP BY RECENT ENCOUNTER BETWEEN EMBOFF AND WORKING-LEVEL OFFICIAL OF FISHERIES DIRECTORATE BASED IN GUAYAQUIL. LATTER STATED, REPEATEDLY AND POINTEDLY, THAT THERE WOULD BE "NO PROBLEMS" AND THAT "QUESTION HAS BEEN RESOLVED".
BREWSTER

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